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Natural stone gallery is Kedah's latest attraction

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JITRA, Tues. - In a State best known for its padi fields stretched lush and green for endless kilometres, a little known and rather unusual resource has gone on exhibition - natural stone.

Some 200 pieces of various sizes, textures and colours shaped over the centuries by forces of nature are on display in Kedah's newest attraction, the Lye Huat Stone and Art Gallery.

The gallery, located in Hosbah, along the North-South expressway, about 10km from here, features the collection of stone set in the midst of a bonzai garden.

Almost all the stones at the gallery are from rivers and hills in Kedah and a small number were also sourced from more than 200 rivers and waterfalls around the country.

Owner, Lim Lye Huat, 45, of Changloon said, natural stone had long been considered a form of high art by the Chinese and Japanese. He added that such a garden was major attraction in the two countries as well as in Singapore and Taiwan.

This and the abundance of high quality river stones in Kedah inspired Lim to set up the gallery, which took three years to complete.

Final work is still under way but Lim plans to eventually open the gallery to the public.

Lim started collecting the stones when he was 38 and now has an estimated 500 pieces to his name.

The gallery also houses a collection of old items made of wood such as an old rickshaw from Malacca, a traditional fishing boat carved out of a single tree and a traditional bullock-cart.

These are part of an Asian art collection housed in low-roofed buildings that feature facades of old Indonesian places, traditional doors and windows from Malacca, Kelantan and Singapore.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to open the gallery on Friday during his two-day working visit to the State.

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